

Speak to the Bnei Yisrael and say to them that they shall make tzitzis on the corners of their garments. (15:38)

There is an inconsistency regarding the manner in which the *mitzvah* of *tzitzis* is introduced. The term "*dibur*," speak, is *lashon kasheh*, strong form of the verb, while "*amirah*," saying, is *lashon rakah*, the soft form. Why would the *mitzvah* of *tzitzis* be presented through two opposite expressions? *Kol Yehudah* explains that there are two aspects to the *mitzvah* of *tzitzis*. First, there is one who wears a four cornered garment. He must put *tzitzis* on the four corners of his garment. Regarding him, the *Torah* speaks - "*You must put on tzitzis.*" There is another situation which is what we might refer to as the gray area: One who does not have a four-cornered garment is not obligated to have *tzitzis*. In reality, he does not have to purchase a *tallis katan*. There is, however, the aspect of *chavivus ha'mitzvah*, the care and love one should have for Hashem's *mitzvos*. One should be excited to wear *tzitzis*, to go out and purchase a pair of *tzitzis*, so that he can perform this easy and wonderful *mitzvah*. If he does not, he is *mevatel*, eliminates, the opportunity for performing a positive *mitzvah*. The *Torah* tells him "in a soft tone" to wear *tzitzis*.

Moments before he passed away from this world, the *Vilna Gaon*, *zl*, held his *tzitzis* in his hands and cried, "How difficult it is to leave this world, where one can earn immeasurable reward in *Olam Habah*, just for spending a few pennies to purchase and wear *tzitzis*." he said. If we would only understand this statement. What greater insult is there to the Almighty than when fine, upstanding Jews just do not bother to wear *tzitzis* because there is no *halachah* that demands it.

A very meaningful story is told about the *Kelmer Maggid* who once happened to spend a weekend in a resort near Riga, Latvia. Members of the community told him that many of the men who were on vacation did not wear *tzitzis* because they did not "bother" to bring them along. On *Shabbos*, when he had occasion to deliver the sermon in the main *shul*, he felt he would address this serious offense. He ascended the podium and related the following story to the worshippers: "I was once in Riga during the summer. I went to someone's home to speak to him. When I came to the door, the maid told me that he had gone to the resort for some rest and relaxation. As I was about to leave, I heard heartrending weeping from a room in the house. I asked the maid for permission to check out the source of this weeping. I looked into the room and found it empty; no one was there. There was, however, a *tallis katan* in the corner of the room that was weeping uncontrollably. "*Tallis, tallis, why are you crying?*" I asked. "Why I should not cry? My owner went for vacation and took everything with him except me!" "Do not worry *tallis*; for one day your owner will leave for an extended trip, to another world, and he will leave everything: his valuables, his clothing, his family, everything - except for you. He will take only you with him."

Obviously, everyone understood that the *maggid* was referring to the day when we leave this world wrapped in our *tallis*. Would it not be a shame if for this last and most important trip our *tallis* would have an estranged relationship with us?